

May 28, 1998

Mr. Chuck Sleeter  
Chairman, Town of Nashville  
Route 1, Box 708  
Crandon, WI 54520-0708

RE: Crandon Mine - Proposed Scientific Data Collection by the Town of Nashville, Forest County, WI

Dear Mr. Sleeter:

Thank you for your correspondence dated April 28, 1998 regarding your request for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) involvement in your proposed Scientific Data Collection Project. The data you propose to collect will be used to help satisfy the following three concerns listed within your letter regarding the Crandon Mine Project:

1. No independent (third party) collection of ore samples has ever been collected and tested;
2. No independent verification of bedrock conductivity has been done to verify and support the figures being used in the groundwater modeling process; and
3. The WDNR has misled and misinformed the public in cooperation with the mining company, and WDNR is currently involved in litigation against the tribal community in our township in cooperation with the mining company.

While the EPA agrees that the first two concerns may be legitimate concerns, it feels that third concern is unfounded, but does realize that this is the perception that persists with you and others presently in opposition to the mine project.

To address these concerns, you requested a meeting with the EPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to discuss a possible short-term cooperative research project between the Sokaogon Chippewa Community, the Town of Nashville and the federal agencies. This research project would include the following:

1. Provide an independent verification of environmental baseline data within the geologic horizon of the ore body;
2. Provide well construction for future hydraulic conductivity tests and verification of bedrock conductivity figures found within the groundwater model(s); and
3. Establishment of a long-term monitoring location for groundwater quality

monitoring.

As you know, Char Hauger and Jon Ahlness, both from COE, and I met with you, Dave Anderson, representing the Town of Nashville and the Sokaogon Chippewa Community, and Sonny Wreczycki representing the Town of Ainsworth, on Friday, May 22, 1998 in the WDNR offices in Rhinelander. (As a side note, I had spoken with Jim Krohelski, USGS, on May 17, 1998 to inform him of our meeting on May 22, but since he was not going to be in attendance at the pyrite removal meeting in Rhinelander on that day, he would not be able to attend our meeting.) At this meeting, you, Dave and Sonny each presented your reason for this proposed project and Dave made it clear that while funding from the federal agencies would be helpful it would not be necessary, but at the very least you would prefer our concurrence on the need for this proposed project and to provide any technical assistance that we could lend. Dave stated that this proposed project is not as simple as drilling a well, but that you would need the assistance of the federal government in the designing of the well, the determining of the optimal location for the well, the running of a high capacity pump test, and other such technical assistance. All the data that would be produced would be made available to all parties.

Char Hauger, COE, stated that the COE is presently continuing work on their groundwater model and have not yet determined what additional data are needed for their evaluation of the overall mining project. Once the COE determines if any further information is needed, including the need for more geological and hydrological data, they would request that the mining company provide it. The COE's draft baseline modeling report is due out in mid-June, with a follow-up meeting with all parties in mid-July, and at that time they will be able to discuss your proposal further. I have also spoken with Jim Krohelski, USGS in Madison, and with Bill Cannon, USGS in Reston, VA, regarding what they thought of your proposal and what USGS could do to assist. They both stated that they did not have funding available for this type of project, but that they could lend technical support such as helping to interpret core samples (USGS-Madison) and helping with the chemical analysis of the core samples (USGS-Reston). However, Mr. Cannon did state that this proposed project may not be reasonable and may not be an efficient use of funds and manpower. He stated that one more well may not answer your concerns, because this one well may not be representative of the entire ore body and that it would be best to work with the material presently available, i.e., re-evaluate the core that is available within the core barn. He did state that the proposed hole would cost approximately \$20-30/foot for a 2" diameter well; so for a 1500' well, the cost would be approximately \$40,000. If the well were to be used for monitoring purposes or for a pump test, the well would need to be a 4" diameter well and an additional \$100,000 for installation would be expected.

With regard to assistance from EPA, I have provided Dave Anderson with a possible grant source from the Watershed Program, but for the most part, funding is limited, if available at all, for this type of project. EPA, along with the other agencies, is willing to provide technical assistance to your project and I will continue to look into possible avenues for funding within the Agency. I do prefer, however, that the COE be depended upon to determine what information is lacking and request that the mining company provide it prior to undergoing any third party investigations. If the mining company is willing to conduct further investigations and provide the missing information, it will be under the supervision of the regulators, and therefore should be acceptable to all parties.

Again, thank you for including the EPA in your proposal. I look forward to discussing this issue with you further. If you have any questions regarding any of the above, please do not hesitate to call me at 312-886-7252.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Cozza, Crandon Mine Project Manager  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

cc:

C. Hauger, COE

B. Wopat, COE

D. Anderson, Mole Lake

A. McCammon-Soltis, GLIFWC

S. Wreczycki, Town of Ainsworth

J. Krohelski, USGS

B. Cannon, USGS

S. Dodge, EPA

H. Nelson, BIA

J. Trick, FWS